United Nations A/58/587

General Assembly

Distr.: General
5 January 2004
English
Original: Arabic

Fifty-eighth session
Agenda item 59

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Report of the Fifth Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Fouad **Rajeh** (Saudi Arabia)

I. Introduction

1. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 19 September 2003, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its fifty-eighth session the item entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations system" and to allocate it to the Fifth Committee for the sole purpose of considering the reports of the Secretary-General entitled "Improvements to the current process of planning and budgeting"[1] and "Intergovernmental review of the medium-term plan and the programme budget".[2]

2. The Fifth Committee considered the item at its 13th, 18th, 23rd, 24th and 30th meetings, on 31 October, 10 November and 1, 3 and 23 December 2003. Statements and observations made in the course of the Committee's consideration of the item are reflected in the relevant summary records (A/C.5/58/SR.13, 18, 23, 24 and 30).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Fifth Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on an intergovernmental review of the medium-term plan and the programme budget (A/57/786);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on improvements to the current process of planning and budgeting (A/58/395 and Corr.1);

(c) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the review of the United Nations budgetary process (A/58/375);

(d) Note by the Secretary-General on improvements to the current process of planning and budgeting (A/58/600);

[1] A/58/395 and Corr.1.
[2] A/57/786.

03-66866 (E) 080104

(e) Reports of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.[3]

II. Consideration of draft resolution A/C.5/58/L.47

4. At its 30th meeting, on 23 December, the representative of India, coordinator of the informal consultations on this item, introduced, on behalf of the Chairman, a draft resolution entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations system: an agenda for further change" (A/C.5/58/L.47).

5. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.5/58/L.47 without a vote (see para. 6).

[3] A/58/7/Add.5 (for the final text see *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 7*) and A/58/610.

III. Recommendation of the Fifth Committee

6. The Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its determination to strengthen further the role, capacity, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations and thus improve its performance in order to realize the full potential of the Organization, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and to respond more effectively to the needs of Member States and existing and new global challenges facing the United Nations in the twenty-first century,

Recalling Articles 17, 18, 97 and 100 of the Charter of the United Nations,

Recalling also its resolutions 41/213 of 19 December 1986, 42/211 of 21 December 1987 and 55/234 of 23 December 2000,

Recalling further the relevant provisions of its resolution 57/300 of 20 December 2002,

Recalling the terms of reference of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, as outlined in the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 2008 (LX) of 14 May 1976,

Emphasizing that resources provided to the Secretary-General should be commensurate with all mandated programmes and activities,

Reaffirming the role of the General Assembly and its relevant intergovernmental and expert bodies, within their respective mandates, in planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation,

Having considered the reports of the Secretary-General entitled "Intergovernmental review of the medium-term plan and the programme budget"[1] and "Improvements to the current process of planning and budgeting",[2] the note by the Secretary-General entitled "Improvements to the current process of planning and budgeting"[3] and the reports of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions thereon,[4]

Taking into account the views expressed by the Member States during the consideration of this item at its fifty-seventh and fifty-eighth sessions,

1. *Welcomes* the Secretary-General's commitment to strengthening the United Nations, including in the planning, programming and budgetary process;

2. *Stresses* that setting the priorities of the United Nations is the prerogative of the Member States, as reflected in legislative mandates;

---

[1] A/57/786.

[2] A/58/395 and Corr.1.

[3] A/58/600.

[4] A/58/7/Add.5 (for the final text see *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 7*) and A/58/610.

3. *Stresses also* the need for the Member States to participate fully in the budgetary preparation process, from its early stages and throughout the process;

4. *Emphasizes* the importance of providing the information necessary to enable Member States to make well-informed decisions;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to prepare, on a trial basis, for submission to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, a strategic framework to replace the current four-year medium-term plan, which would comprise in one document:

(a) Part one: a plan outline, reflecting the longer-term objectives of the Organization;

(b) Part two: a biennial programme plan, to cover two years;

6. *Decides* that:

(a) The budget outline shall continue to provide the same level of detail as at present, in accordance with regulation 3.2 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation;

(b) The budget outline shall be submitted and considered for adoption after the consideration and adoption of the strategic framework;

(c) After their approval, the budget outline and strategic framework will together form the basis for preparing the proposed programme budget;

7. *Affirms* that the strategic framework, as outlined above, shall constitute the principal policy directive of the United Nations and shall serve as the basis for programme planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation;

8. *Decides* to review, with a view to taking a final decision at its sixty-second session, the format, content and duration of the strategic framework, including the necessity of maintaining part one, and requests the Secretary-General to present a report, through the Committee for Programme and Coordination, reviewing the experiences gained with the changes made in the planning and budgetary process;

9. *Decides also* that the programme narratives of the programme budget fascicles will be identical to the biennial programme plan;

10. *Decides further* to keep the current format of the proposed programme budget and to maintain the level of information contained therein;

11. *Decides* that the Committee for Programme and Coordination will no longer consider the budget outline;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to include in the introduction of the budget fascicles information on the new and/or revised mandates approved by the General Assembly subsequent to the adoption of the biennial programme plan;

13. *Requests* the Committee for Programme and Coordination, in performing its programmatic role in the planning and budgeting process, to review the programmatic aspects of the new and/or revised mandates referred to above, as well as any differences that arise between the biennial programme plan and the programmatic aspects of the proposed programme budget;

14. *Also requests* the Committee for Programme and Coordination, in the context of its report on its forty-fifth session, to provide comments on the various aspects of the review process referred to above;

15. *Emphasizes* the importance of the intergovernmental nature of the Committee for Programme and Coordination in discharging its functions;

16. *Invites* the Committee for Programme and Coordination to submit at its forty-fourth session proposals on enhancing its role in monitoring and evaluation;

17. *Recalls* operative paragraph 34 of its resolution 57/300, in which the General Assembly invited the Committee for Programme and Coordination to continue to improve its working methods;

18. *Invites* the Committee for Programme and Coordination to submit, at its forty-fourth session, recommendations on improving its effectiveness;

19. *Emphasizes* the need to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation system, and in this regard urges the Secretary-General to improve the format and timing of programme performance and evaluation reports;

20. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that resources are clearly identified in all the sections of the proposed programme budget for the performance of the monitoring and evaluation functions;

21. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to entrust the Office of Internal Oversight Services, in collaboration with the Joint Inspection Unit, with submitting to the General Assembly proposals on the strengthening and monitoring of programme performance and evaluation, for its consideration at its sixtieth session.